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State Representative Harry Benton

Benton Advances Bill Making Turkey Hunting More Accessible

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Young hunters and older sportspeople would have more options for turkey hunting under a new bill advanced through a House committee by state Rep. Harry Benton, D-Plainfield, allowing smaller ammunition options that some find easier to use.

“Turkey hunting is a beloved sport and a tradition in many Illinois families,” Benton said. “That’s why making it accessible to as many people as possible by relaxing excessive limitations is the right thing to do.”

Benton’s House Bill 4237 would allow turkey hunters to use a shotgun of not larger than 10 gauge nor smaller than .410 bore. The smallest bore permitted for turkey hunting under current law is 20 gauge.

A .410 bore shotgun is about 33% smaller than a 20-gauge, and smaller shotguns are lighter and tend to produce less recoil. The combination of lighter weight and less recoil could make turkey hunting accessible to more people, particularly children hunting with parents and those with disabilities.

The Committee unanimously recommended passage of the bill and referred it to the full House of Representatives, where it has bipartisan sponsorship and awaits a vote.

“Making turkey hunting more accessible for Illinoisans with disabilities and to younger hunters experiencing a family tradition for the first time gets families connecting together with the outdoors,” Benton said. “By removing barriers to participation, it promotes inclusion and helps more people enjoy our state’s natural beauty. And it’s inclusion, not restrictions, that move Illinois forward.”

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